

## What is paternity?

The legal determination of the natural father of a child.

If a child's parents are not married to each other when the child is born, that child does not have a legal father. The parents need to establish paternity.

## Why should I establish paternity?

Establishing paternity can provide emotional, social and financial support for your child.

## How does the biological, or natural, father become the legal father?

The easiest way is to complete the Acknowledgment of Paternity Affidavit (JFS 07038).

## What is the Acknowledgment of Paternity Affidavit?

It is a legal document that lets unmarried parents name the natural father and establish paternity for their child. Both parents sign the affidavit. Completing the affidavit is voluntary.



## What if we are not sure who the natural father is?

Only the natural parents should sign the affidavit. If you are not sure who the natural father is, don't sign. Establishing paternity by DNA testing might be a better option for you. Contact your local child support enforcement agency (CSEA) for more information.

## Who should NOT complete the affidavit?

- A married mother
- A mother divorced within 300 days of the child's birth
- A mother who is legally separated from her husband

There are other unique circumstances that would prevent an individual from using the affidavit to establish paternity. If you are unsure, please contact your local CSEA.

## Where do I get the affidavit?

- At the hospital when your baby is born
- At your local registrar's office (also called Vital Statistics or the Health Department) after your baby is born
- At your local CSEA after your baby is born

## What do I do with the affidavit to make it official?

Both parents must sign the affidavit in the presence of a public notary and have the affidavit notarized, but they don't have to sign it at the same time.

Each parent will need a picture ID (such as a driver's license) and Social Security number.

There are easy to follow instructions on the affidavit.

Notaries are provided free of charge at hospitals, local registrars and local CSEAs.

## Can minors sign the affidavit?

Yes, minors can sign the affidavit.

## Can non-U.S. citizens sign the affidavit?

Yes. Regardless of a parent's citizenship, if a child was born in the U.S., paternity can be established. The affidavit is not used to track non-U.S. citizens.

## When does the affidavit become final?

The affidavit is final 60 days after the date of the last signature, as long as no one else raises the issue of paternity and the affidavit is properly signed, notarized and filed with the Central Paternity Registry.

## What if I change my mind after signing the affidavit?

The mother or the man who signed the affidavit can stop the process anytime within 60 days of signing it by contacting your local CSEA. After the 60-day period, you must contact an attorney.

## If the man signs the affidavit, will he be required to pay child support?

It depends. Both parents have a responsibility to support their child. If the child is receiving certain benefits, the father may be required to pay child support. Contact your local CSEA to discuss your situation and get specific answers.

## How are custody and visitation determined?

If the mother is unmarried at the time of the child's birth, she automatically has legal custody of the child. All custody and visitation issues must be addressed by the courts.



## Potential Benefits of Establishing Paternity

### Identity

- The child will have relationships with both parents and extended families.
- Father's name will appear on the child's birth certificate.

### Custody and Visitation

- The non-custodial parent (the parent the child does not live with) can request visitation rights and custody.

### Financial

- Both parents share financial responsibilities.
- The child may be eligible for Social Security, veteran's benefits, inheritance benefits or child support.

### Medical

- The child will have access to family medical history.
- More informed decisions can be made regarding the child's health insurance.



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## Paternity Enhancement Program

*To learn more about:*

Establishing paternity

Frequently asked questions

Important contact information

If the affidavit is right for you

*Please visit:*

[www.oh-paternity.com](http://www.oh-paternity.com)

*or call:*

**1-888-810-OHIO (6446)**



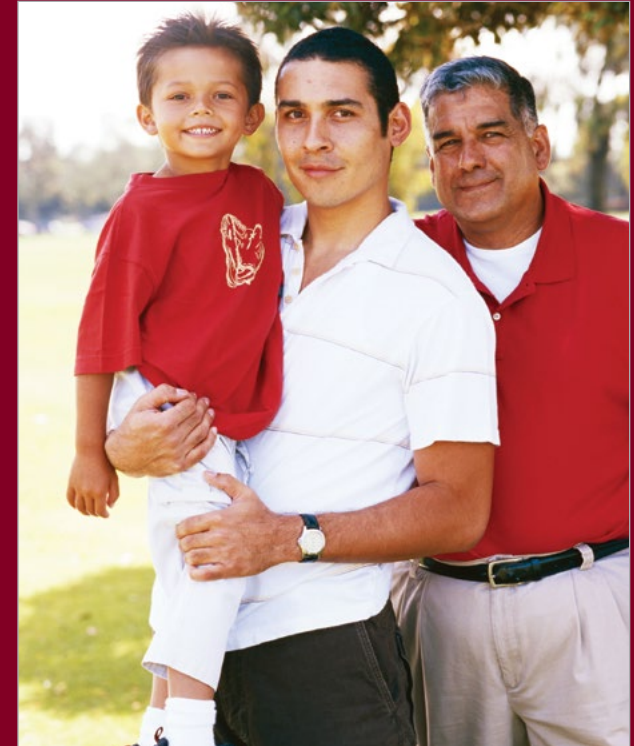
Mike DeWine, Governor  
State of Ohio

Kimberly Hall, Director  
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Office of Child Support

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**“What a  
difference a  
Dad makes!”**

*Information about the  
Paternity Enhancement Program  
and the Acknowledgment of  
Paternity Affidavit.*